

Yale Graduate Student Causes a Stir with Book on Heroin and the C.I.A.

Every now and then the University community discovers that one of its members just happens to be the author of a best-selling book, or at least a book that is causing a lot of talk. It's happening again.

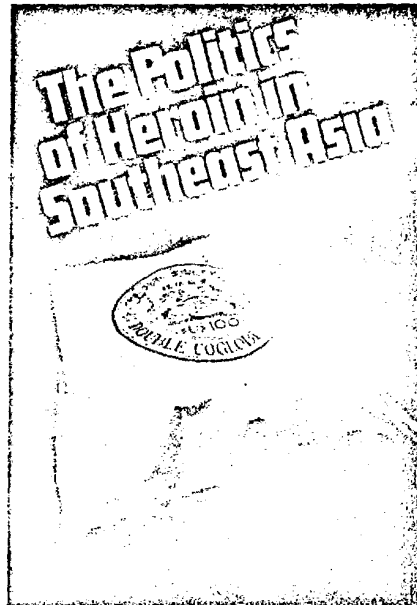
"The Politics of Heroin in Southeast Asia" (Harper & Row), by Alfred W. McCoy, a Yale graduate student in Southeast Asian history, may not rise to the top of best-seller lists but it has caused a considerable stir in government and publishing circles because it reveals, among other things, the complicity of the Central Intelligence Agency in the world heroin trade.

The book is the product of 18 months of research—four in Southeast Asia—and 275 interviews, many of them in the "Golden Triangle" region where Laos, Thailand and Burma meet and where 70 per cent of the world's illegal opium poppies are grown.

McCoy's book documents in exhaustive detail the route and manner in which refined heroin travels from the hillsides of northern Laos to the streets of America's cities. The opium trade generates the major financial resources for the U.S.-allied Meo guerrillas of northern Laos, McCoy charges. He further insists that C.I.A. personnel in the region not only tolerate the opium trade, but abet it and profit from it.

Back home, the C.I.A., aware of McCoy's research and familiar with his testimony on the matter before a Senate subcommittee, disagreed with his charges and demanded to see a pre-publication copy of the book. Harper & Row, while insisting that it was not submitting to censorship, gave the C.I.A. a set of galleys—a move which McCoy "totally opposed." The C.I.A. returned the galleys with a list of minor factual objections but failed to refute the author's main thesis, and on Aug. 17 Harper & Row published the book without a single change from its original version.

McCoy is taking the fall semester off from the Graduate School. He doesn't have time, he says, for school and all the business surrounding the publication of "The Politics of Heroin." He says he enjoys celebrity and has had quite a bit of media exposure lately, though he is still



\$1,000 in the red as a result of research and travel costs associated with writing the book.

McCoy, who co-edited another book about Laos in 1970, still hasn't completed a portion of his doctoral comprehensive exams at Yale and hasn't had time to work on a dissertation, although he has a topic. Meanwhile, Harper & Row has three more ideas for books it would like him to write.

Why not ask Yale to credit the work he has already done toward the requirements for a doctoral thesis?

"Aw, come on," he says, "you know Yale well enough to know it doesn't work that way."

